10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

legendary white python and who was released only by the sacrifice of her husband. On her release she wove the pattern of the python's skin into her skirt thus offering him the greatest insult that she knew. (This incident is related in the story of "Ku Law Lay and Naw Mu Eh".)

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562
773
[291]

Bathing is an important item of comfort in a hot country, being not so much for cleanliness as for coolness. In the hills where the water is icy cold as it comes from the mountain springs, and where often the village is located far above the water streams, bathing is not indulged in to any great extent. Nor do Karens mind dirty clothes, for they know that much washing wears them out, as they have to depend upon rubbing and pounding rather than upon soap. In the seclusion of the mountain forests they often play about in the water without clothes. On the plains, where bathing is more common either in the open rivers or at the village well, they

Karen male costume

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[312]

10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

615 bathe in the *longyi* then draw a dry one over the wet one which they drop down underneath, thus making the change publicly but modestly without exposing the person. The wet garment is then soused in water and the laundry work is done.

VIII

INTELLECTUAL CHARACTERISTICS

181 156 771 152 The Karens, as was said of the people of Borneo, "are not inferior but different". In their primitive state they were subject to the slavery of fear which had retarded their development. To them as to most primitive races all that is unknown is to be feared. They peopled, with all kinds of malevolent demons, the hills, the streams and the big trees, especially the banyan which is held in awe throughout the Orient probably because of its great fertility and tenacious hold on life. They were surrounded by fierce wild animals and more numerous and powerful neighbours. One of their own number aptly described his race as one that "is capable of being afraid".

This timidity has often militated against them. Because of fear they dare not speak their mind. They resort to the common "don't know" and thus hope to escape attention. They are easily thrown into a panic which disorganizes their thinking and makes them ridiculous when under the cross fire of examination or in a crisis. School-boys will not assert themselves and are often adjudged stupid when in reality they have done better daily work while plodding along than their more vocal fellows. Women are especially shy and in primitive villages will run from a stranger.

The generations through which they have been

19: Marshall M-6 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

291 and the fulness tucked in at the waist line, thus allowing the action of the knees. The garment remains in place remarkably [515] well, although no belt is used. When the women bathe—those on the plains doing so with much more regularity than their sisters in the hills—they bring the top of the skirt up under the armpits and fasten it over the breasts in the same manner as about the waist.

291 294 The jackets or smocks of the women present a variety of designs. The most common is the plain black or dark blue "hse" with little or no ornament on it. Sometimes it is decorated with small [824] rosettes or stars of colored yarns or, among the Pwo, with fern-like figures. The prettiest decorations are made with the hard white seeds of various shapes of the plant called Job's Tears *(Coix)*. The variety mostly used are those resembling barberries, called "bwe" in Sgaw Karen and found all over the hills. These are sewed on the finished garment in parallel rows, in rows forming V-shaped figures, or in the forms of stars or rosettes and edging the arm and neck holes. Red yarns or pieces of red cloth are also sewed on to add to the ornamentation. In Shwegyin we often see a "hse" [286] that is woven with elaborate designs of red and green on a black ground, red tape being sewed in vertical lines on the body of the garment and in horizontal lines over the shoulders. The head-dress of the women is called "hko peu ki" and among the Sgaw women consists of a piece of cloth about two yards long and a foot wide. The middle part is plain white. At either end there is a fancy woven ("u") portion about twenty inches long, red in color and crossed at intervals of two inches by transverse lines. In the middle of these colored ends is a white zigzag line representing a serpent. The other lines are in pairs, those equidistant from the zigzag above and below being alike and having their special designations. These names are, however, in archaic form, and their meaning is not well known. There are long white fringes on the ends of the head-dress and shorter colored ones at the ends of the cross lines. When worn, it is twisted about the head in such a way as to form a peak over the forehead with the colored fringes hanging down about the eyes and the long white fringes down the back.

301 In a few villages in the Pegu Hills the women wear circlets ("hko hhlaw") of bamboo or silver, around which they coil their hair. The metal circlets are made of beaten silver a scant inch in width and long enough to go once and a half around the head, being held